

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 129

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

CONFIDENTIAL BRAZZAVILLE 033

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CF

SUBJECT: NGOUABI ASSASSINATION TRIAL, JANUARY 4-5

1. SUMMARY: INITIAL DEFENDANTS CALLED, IN WHAT NOW AUGURS TO BE A LONG TRIAL OF THOSE ACCUSED IN NGOUABI ASSASSINATION. END SUMMARY.

2. TRIAL'S SECOND DAY WENT SLOWLY, LEADING MOST FOLLOWERS TO CONCLUSION THAT PROCESS WILL CONTINUE FOR LONGER PERIOD THAN INITIALLY ANTICIPATED. TWO MORE ACCUSED WERE ARRAIGNED, MAKOUANGOU AND MADZELA.

3. DEFENDANT JEAN-PIERRE/NDOUDI CONFESSED TO HAVING CARRIED A BOX TO DEFENDANTS KOUDISSA-TADET AND KANDZA WHICH, HE EXPLAINED, HE HAD NOT KNOWN CONTAINED A WEAPON, SUBSEQUENTLY FOUND AT SCENE OF ASSASSINATION, MARCH 18, 1977. PROSECUTOR OKOKO HIT HAND AT "MYSTICAL" AND REAL POLITICAL" NATURE OF RELIGIOUS MEETINGS NDOUDI ATTENDED IN COMPANY OF MASSAMBA DEBAT.

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4. OKOKO WAS PARTICULARLY ROUGH DURING AFTERNOON, REPORTEDLY LEADING PRESIDENT YHOMBY-OPANGO TO ASK COURT PRESIDENT ASSEMELANG TO HAVE OKOKO COOL IT THE NEXT DAY. REPEATEDLY, OKOKO CRITICIZED RELIGIOUS THOUGHT, CITING 1969 CONSTITUTION, WHICH MAKES ILLEGAL THE USE OF RELIGION FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. (IN FACT, IT IS CHAPTER II, ARTICLE 18 OF JUNE 24, 1973 CONSTITUTION WHICH IS OPERATIONAL.) NDOUDI REPLIED

ALLEGING HE HAD BEEN BEATEN UP, AND THAT TRIAL WAS ON BASIS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SOUTHERNERS FROM POOL REGION.

5. REFERENCES WERE MADE IN PASSING TO POLITICAL FIGURES HOMBESSA, LISSOUBA, NDALLA GRAILE, MONDJO, AND GANAO, BUT THAT WAS ALL.

6. DEFENSE ATTORNEY BEMBA, APPOINTED BY COURT TO REPRESENT MANY OF CASE'S INDIGENT DEFENDANTS, HAD BITTER EXCHANGE WITH ASSEMELANG AT END OF DAY, CLAIMING HE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO SEE DOSSIER OF ONE OF HIS DEFENDANTS. FYI: BEMBA IS A SOUTHERNER, AND LONG-TIME CONGOLESE SUPPORTER OF FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY. SEVERAL CONGOLESE WELL VERSED IN THOUGHTS OF BYZANTIUM, BELIEVE BEMBA WAS NAMED IN EFFORT TO DISCREDIT SOUTH, FRANCE, AND SOVIET COMMUNISM--ADDING THAT FOR SAME REASON, FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY DELIBERATELY WAS NOT ASKED TO SEND DELEGATION TO RECENTLY CONCLUDED YOUTH CONGRESS HERE. END FYI.

7. DURING DISCUSSION FOLLOWING SECOND DAY OF TRIAL, PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR EKONDY TOLD CHARGE THAT GOCB REALLY DID NOT KNOW WHO HAD KILLED NGOUABI, NOR, REALLY, WHY.

8. NEXT DEFENDANT, GERMAIN MIZELE, WAS HEARD ON DAY 3. MORE OPEN THAN NDOUDI, HE--MASSAMBA-DEBAT'S BROTHER-IN-LAW-- ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED ATTENDING PRAYER SESSIONS, AND DELIVERING CONFIDENTIAL

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LETTER TO NGOUABI, IN WHICH MASSAMBA-DEBAT ASKED THAT HE STEP DOWN FROM POWER. MIZELE ADMITTED SEEING AT MASSAMBA-DEBAT'S HOME ON MARCH 18, 1977 A CAN WHICH MASSAMBA-DEBAT TOLD HIM BELONGED TO KIKADIDI. CALLED AS A WITNESS, MASSAMBA-DEBAT'S WIDOW DENIED SEEING KIKADIDI OR MIZELE AT HER HOME MARCH 18. MIZELE THAN REVEALED THAT, ON MARCH 18, MASSAMBA-DEBAT HAD TOLD HIM HE HAD SENT SEVERAL "CHILDREN TO ARMY HEADQUARTERS TO SEIZE POWER." MASSAMBA-DEBAT REPORTEDLY IDENTIFIED "THE CHILDREN" TO MIZELE AS BEING KOUDISSA-TADET, ALBERT MIENAKOU, KIANGUILA, AND KANDZA. MIZELE SAID HE HAD BELIEVED KIKADIDI'S INTENTION TO HAVE BEEN TO KIDNAP NGOUABI. MIZELE, A TAILOR, THEN ADMITTED TO HAVING GIVEN CLOTHING TO KANDZA AND KIANGUILA WHEN THEY HAD COME TO HIS HOME FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION.

KATZEN

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